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ABSTRACT

This case study evaluated a second grade teacher and her students and the implementation of a conflict resolution program in the classroom; the goals of the evaluation were to provide descriptive data on the success or failure of the program and why those results occurred, and to make recommendations for program improvement. The study used multiple collection methods for data. Findings indicated that the teacher improved her effectiveness in classroom management and discipline, students felt safe, and both the teacher and the students successfully used conflict resolution. However, students were not self-regulating of their behavior, nor was mutual trust experienced in the classroom. These findings may be attributed to the teacher's traditional teaching philosophy and style, which are opposed to the constructivist philosophy that is the basis of conflict resolution. The paper concludes with recommendations for policy and practice based on the results of the study for the consideration of educators. (Contains 63 references.) (EV)

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A Case Study of the Implementation of Conflict Resolution in a Second Grade Classroom

Abstract

This article is describes the results of case study of a second grade teacher and her students who implemented conflict resolution in the classroom. The results indicated that the teacher improved her effectiveness in classroom management and discipline, students felt safe, and both the teacher and the students successfully used conflict resolution. However, students were not self-regulating of their behavior, nor was mutual trust experienced in the classroom. These latter issues were attributed to the teacher's traditional teaching philosophy and style that were on the opposite end of the continuum from the constructivist philosophy that is the basis of conflict resolution. The article closes with recommendations for policy and practice based on the results of the study for the consideration of educators.

Violence in society has increased in the last decade and statistics indicate that there is an increase in school violence as well (Hamburger, 1993; Johnson & Johnson, 1995). As a result, schools are currently challenged to find ways to reduce school violence. The question for educators is how do schools reduce school violence and in what ways can educators help with this reduction of violence?

One large public school district in Florida has met the challenge of school violence by instituting a number of peace education programs. This article reports the results of a case study of one of those programs, specifically the implementation of a conflict resolution program. In so doing, the article provides information about efforts at violence reduction and poses ideas for consideration by educators as they implement conflict resolution.

Literature Review

Tracing the Impact of Violence

Societal violence in the United States has been prevalent in all segments of society for some time (Rosenberg, 1991). Sadly, more than any other segment of society, adolescents and children are increasingly at risk for being involved in violence (Sautter, 1995). For adolescents, the incidence of physically harmful violence that results in injury and death, and the risk for victimization has risen (Tolan & Guerra, 1994). In addition, for the nearly twenty percent of all children and adolescents who live below the poverty line, violence is an everyday experience in their neighborhoods (Children's Defense Fund, 1991).

Besides the actual experiencing of violent acts, American children experience what is known as "second-hand violence" (Carlsson-Paige & Levin, 1992c, p. 4). Second-hand violence refers to exposure to violence through a variety of media, ranging from toys to television shows. Violence

on television is so pervasive that the average child between the ages of 5 and 15 will watch 13,000 killings on television (Singer & Singer, 1990).

The frequency of violence in society in general, and children's and adolescent's exposure to violence in particular, spills over into schools. It is no surprise that more and more teachers are complaining about what they see as an escalation of violence in the schools (Carlson-Paige & Levin, 1991, 1992c). Furthermore, about 11% of all crimes nation wide occur in the public schools and school violence is considered to be worse that it was just a half a decade ago (Sautter, 1995).

Defining School Violence

Interestingly, there is currently no comprehensive definition of school violence. Different school districts report school violence using different terms and do not estimate the frequency of specific behaviors (Astor, 1995). Therefore, in order to have uniformity in estimating violent behaviors for the purposes of the study reported in this article, a comprehensive definition of school violence was generated.

School violence was defined as intentional acts of aggression with the intention of causing pain or discomfort to others, either directly (from bullying and fighting to a disrespectful tone and name calling) or indirectly (as in theft or vandalism). This definition was developed because it is violent behaviors such as these that disrupt the learning environment for students and make schools unsafe places. Additionally, this definition is based on the research on violent behaviors indicating that interpersonal peer violence is stable throughout development (Farrington, 1991; Olweus, 1984; Patterson, 1982). In other words, children who have been found to display violent behaviors during elementary school are more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system

and to display violence late in life (Cairns & Cairns, 1991; Eron, 1987; Farrington, 1991; Olweus, 1991). As a result, it is the responsibility of educators to be attune to both the direct and indirect forms of violent behavior noted in elementary schools that later escalate into more severe violence in high schools. Attempting to reduce these behaviors not only reduces disruptions to the learning environment, but enhances school safety as well.

School Violence Prevention

Violence in schools is typically addressed in one of two ways: punishment or intervention. The traditional approach has been punishment, such as detentions, suspension, and expulsion (Ray, Kestmer, & Freedman, 1985 as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1995). In general, teachers attempt to avoid conflicts or suppress them, feeling that conflicts alienate students from each other (Collins, 1970; DeCecco & Richard, 1974 as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1988). However, avoidance or suppression only makes those conflicts worse (Johnson & Johnson, 1995). Attempts to suppress violent behavior are also accomplished through the use of school police. Recently, programs to eliminate weapons in schools, such as the use of metal detectors, have been implemented (Harrington-Lucker, 1992).

On the other hand, intervention programs attempt to reduce school violence through non-punitive means. Peace education intervention programs have as their general goal students becoming self-regulating of their behavior. For example, in one peace education program, conflict resolution, the social skills necessary to peacefully resolve conflicts are taught to and modeled for students, who are then coached and encouraged to use these skills (Tolan & Guerra, 1994). Consequently, the teacher serves as facilitator and coach, enabling the students to become self-regulating. The goal of self-regulation in conflict resolution is based on the philosophy of

constructivism. This philosophical perspective is defined in the following paragraph as it pertains to conflict resolution programs.

The educational philosophy of constructivism, a popular movement in education (Phillips, 1995), posits that students must become actively engaged in their learning, connect new information to prior knowledge, and reconcile discrepancies that occur (Brooks & Brooks, 1993; O'Neil, 1992). Although originally seen as a strategy for teaching, today's constructivism is viewed as an overall philosophy of learning in that it approaches learning from the subjectivist dimension where the learner interprets or constructs what is learned to make sense of the world (Posner, 1995; Wiles & Bondi, 1993). According to this philosophy, successful learners have many opportunities to "construct" their experiences and knowledge through exploration and discovery. Conflict resolution programs employ the constructivist philosophy as they typically teach, model, coach, and encourage students to explore their conflicts and to construct peaceable resolutions to them (Carlsson-Paige & Levin, 1992a, 1992b; Kohlberg & Likona, 1990; Tolan & Guerra, 1994). As a result, students learn the skills necessary to: (a) solve problems on their own, for immediate issues and for the long term (Carlsson-Paige & Levin, 1992c); (b) improve their social competence; and (c) enhance their resiliency (Bernard, 1993). Furthermore, as students develop problem solving skills, social competence, and resiliency, they then become empowered to make their own decisions about their lives. This is a pivotal point since empowering students to make good personal life choices is the goal of therapeutic intervention by school psychologists, counselors, and social workers (Astor, 1995). Finally, the skills students develop in problem solving and decision making also allow them to become self-regulating, empowered members of our democratic society (Beane, 1990; Remy, 1980 as cited in McIntyre and O'Hair,

1996).

Research Design

Design Selection

The research reported here was conducted as part of an evaluation of the conflict resolution program in one school district. The goals of the evaluation were to provide descriptive data on the success or failure of the program and why those results occurred, and to make recommendations for program improvement. A case study approach was selected, as it seeks to describe changes and explore why such changes occur (Gay, 1987). Furthermore, the case study format is frequently used for evaluation and allows the researcher to make recommendations for policy and practice (Case, 1993; Lancey, 1993).

Research Model

The case study reported here was based on a framework that sought to understand both the context and the process (Silverman, 1993) of conflict resolution implementation, therefore allowing a description of both the classroom level changes and why they occurred. Therefore, a research model using the work of noted researchers (Silverman, 1993; Stake, 1967 as cited in Posner, 1995) was selected to achieve these purposes. The subsequent paragraphs define the model.

Context in the research model described here refers to environment, often termed culture or climate. School culture or climate is discussed frequently in the literature on effective schools, particularly in relation to change efforts. Positive school climates, those that incorporate effective leadership, teacher empowerment, sharing, and collegiality, have been found to support change efforts (Goldman & O'Shea, 1990; Simpson, 1990). However, if the school climate does not

support the efforts, improvement may require a long time. Yet, classroom climate may be impacted immediately (Garcia, 1992). Therefore, context, or climate, occurs at two levels: school wide and in classrooms. Since the research reported here sought to document classroom level changes, the focus of investigation of the context was at the classroom level. This exploration of context gave the background information necessary to more clearly understand the impact of the conflict resolution program. The particular areas of focus within the climate were: classroom rules, safety, trust, and respect as research has indicated these areas as critical to creating the positive classroom climate necessary for learning (Arends, 1994; Florida Department of Education, 1992; TEA/AEF, 1993).

The second feature of the model, the process of the conflict resolution implementation, was defined in two parts. Both the practice of conflict resolution and the phenomena (Silverman, 1993) or outcome of the practice were explored. In order to assess practice, teacher effectiveness and the use of conflict resolution were examined, while referral rates were the focus of the outcome. Each of these areas was selected as foci for the following reasons. Teacher effectiveness is critical to promoting classroom management and student learning (Arends, 1994; Florida Department of Education, 1992), in this case in the area of conflict resolution. Also, assessing the actual use of conflict resolution by the teacher and the students was necessary to evaluate successful program implementation. Finally, a reduction in referral rates has been identified as one positive outcome of conflict resolution programs (Hawkins & Lam, 1987; Speirs, 1994).

In essence, this research model employed in this case study can be likened to common curriculum evaluation models which assess antecedents (context), transactions (practice), and

outcomes (phenomena) (Stake, 1967 as cited in Posner, 1995). Hence, the study design/model is appropriate for evaluating and describing the implementation of conflict resolution.

Research Question

The investigation began with a primary research question: What is the impact of conflict resolution? However, the researchers needed to look at that question in light of the context in which it occurred, the classroom climate; the process by which it occurred, teacher effectiveness and the social practice of implementing conflict resolution; and the phenomena or outcome it generated, reduced referral rates (Silverman, 1993). Therefore, the primary research question was expanded to: How does the use of conflict resolution by an elementary teacher in the classroom influence the teacher and his/her students?

To insure reliability and validity when answering this question, the triangulation processes of multiple kinds of data, multiple sources of data, and multiple methods for collection were used. An example of various methods and sources used in this study were surveys and focus groups to ascertain students' perceptions. In this example, both the methods and source are considered important in classroom level research (Vaughn, Schumm, & Sinagub, 1993; Waxman & Eash, 1983). In addition, multiple kinds of data, such as using both quantitative and qualitative data as in the previous example, enhanced triangulation (Silverman, 1993).

Research Value

The practical value of this research is the description and evaluation of both the context and the process for conflict resolution implementation. The resulting information may serve as the basis for further research, which may explore for direct linear relationships among issues identified within the context and process of conflict resolution. Further, this article clearly

defines the design, methodology, and analysis in the study to insure replicability and rigor, and therefore makes further research in conflict resolution more manageable (Constas, 1992).

The research reported in this article also contributes theoretical value to the field of education, particularly in the area of conflict resolution. The results and findings of the research are presented as strengths of the program and barriers to it. Additionally, two themes emerged, which connect to the theoretical perspective on which conflict resolution programs are based.

Methodology

Subject Recruitment

The elementary school selected for this study was chosen because it was instituting "peace education," specifically the conflict resolution program, for the first time. Hence, data collection for the conflict resolution program was not contaminated by the previous institution of other peace education programs.

The participating teacher, a Caucasian female, was recruited for participation because she had a higher than average rate of referrals for discipline problems. Referrals for discipline problems were made for both direct and indirect acts of aggression or forms of violence. Since the limited research available on conflict resolution has found a decrease in referrals and suspensions result from using conflict resolution programs (Hawkins & Lam, 1987; Speirs, 1994), it was determined that a decreased referral rate would be considered an indicator of successful program implementation. Consequently, it was thought that a teacher with a higher than average rate of referrals for discipline should show a decrease in referrals if she successfully implemented the program.

The case study was conducted in a heterogeneously grouped second grade. After discounting

students from in and out migration, the participant students in the classroom totaled twenty-two. Specific demographic data is not reported here in order to insure anonymity. However, permission was granted to share the overall school demographics of which the case study classroom was a reflection. School wide rates for ethnic/racial diversity are as follow: 49% Caucasian, 40% black, 10% Hispanic, and 1% other. Economic level was reflected in the free/reduced lunch rate of approximately 52%. Limited English Proficient students comprised 18% of the school population, while Exceptional Education Students constituted 9%.

The Conflict Resolution Program

The conflict resolution program used in the classroom described in this study followed the previously defined methodology of teach, model, coach, and encourage (Tolan & Guerra, 1994). Materials consisted of the Peace Works curriculum (Schmidt & Freidman, 1993). These grade-level specific curriculum materials define the social skills and techniques necessary for conflict resolution while providing interesting activities for teaching them. Teacher training consisted of two, three-hour sessions and follow up consultations as requested. The first training session presented the rationale for program adoption, the program's benefits and outcomes, and information about the materials to be used in the classroom. For example, the importance of building a caring community through trust and respect in the classroom were emphasized. The second session focussed on the teaching methodology and the use of materials. During the training process the school developed an implementation plan for teaching the conflict resolution program.

Study Duration

The research study time frame was the academic year of 1995-1996. Data were collected at

three intervals: the time prior to the teacher training and classroom implementation of the program; the phase when the teacher implemented the program through teaching, modeling, coaching, and encouraging; and the end of the school year.

Instruments

Although the research reported here primarily used a qualitative approach, some quantitative data were collected for triangulation purposes. The following sections delineate the instruments used. It is important to note here that each of the instruments employed in data collection were conducted by the same researcher to insure reliability in administration.

Interviews. The participant teacher was interviewed to ascertain her perceptions of her classroom management and discipline as well as her use of conflict resolution. The surveys that the teacher completed during phase one of the research were used as informal interview guides. Data collection used selective verbatim techniques (Acheson & Gall, 1992). Triangulation for validity of the interview data was achieved through interviewing, recording observations, and respondent validation of the resulting typed transcript (Constas, 1992). Data were analyzed using the same procedures for analyzing observation data as described in the "Classroom Observations" section of this article. Interview data were triangulated with the teacher and students' surveys and classroom observations to fully assess the teacher's classroom management and discipline and implementation of the conflict resolution program. The formal interview was conducted during the second phase of the research and lasted for thirty minutes, but was supplemented with frequent informal discussions at the time of the classroom observations that were documented as field notes. (Please see the "Classroom Observation" section for a further description of the field notes.)

Focus Groups. The focus group guidelines allowed for collection of additional data on the areas examined in the students' surveys. For example, classroom climate questions assessed students' understanding of the concept of respect, a key component of the caring environment that is part of conflict resolution. The focus group lasted approximately forty minutes, was tape recorded, and typed verbatim into a transcript. The transcript was analyzed using the procedure for category development and refinement defined in the following section. The focus group data, observations, and student surveys triangulated the data collected on students' perceptions of the conflict resolution program's practice.

Classroom Observations. General classroom observations were conducted to gather data on the practice of conflict resolution, plus additional information on context. The observer sat in an unobtrusive place and recorded field notes during each observation. Reliability was attained through the following process (Silverman, 1993). Descriptions of the teacher and students' behaviors were recorded long hand. The field notes were subsequently typed. Shortly thereafter the notes were expanded. Observer's comments were added documenting facts and support information.

Following this process the resulting documents were reviewed for category development (Constas, 1992). Categories were originated based on themes that were repeated among all of the data sets in the study. For example, students' self-regulating behavior was a recurrent theme. The categories were verified through a literature search and named accordingly. Categories emerging from the field notes of the observations were then triangulated with data from other sources. Only categories that were triangulated were considered for the results and findings of this study.

The Florida Performance Measurement System evaluations were used to assess teacher effectiveness. The FPMS is well researched and is based on "the best knowledge . . . about the classroom performance of effective teachers" (Florida Department of Education, 1992, forward). Since the instrument is widely used throughout the state of Florida to evaluate teachers' effectiveness and is employed in the district where this research occurred, it was selected for use in this study. An initial FPMS evaluation was conducted on each teacher participant to ascertain that they had a minimal level of effectiveness. This was done in order to insure that they would be able to implement the conflict resolution program as it was intended. Subsequently, FPMS observations were conducted for specific teacher behavior in the teaching domains related to the conflict resolution program. Therefore, the observations focused on Domain 3.0 Instructional Organization and Development and Domain 2.0 Management of Student Conduct. Data collection and analysis followed the FPMS guidelines.

Surveys. The teacher was asked to complete two surveys at the beginning of the study. These surveys were, respectively, "Quality Management in the Classroom Checklist: Teacher Self-Assessment" (Blum & Olson, 1990) and "Attitude Regarding Conflict," teacher version (Jenkins & Smith, 1986-1987). At the beginning of the study surveys were used for simple descriptions of perceptions. During program implementation they were used as informal interview guides with the teacher. The resulting discussions yielded rich descriptions of the teacher's perceptions of her classroom management and discipline style, as well as her use of conflict resolution.

Due to the age of the children in the second grade classroom, it was not deemed appropriate to administer full surveys. Six items were selected from the "Attitude Regarding Conflict"

(Jenkins & Smith, 1986-1987) survey, and three from the "Classroom Effectiveness Survey" (Orange County Public School, 1990). These items were selected because they solicited specific information on the context or process of conflict resolution, such as students' of safety in the classroom. To enhance validity of administration, the survey items were read orally to the students. The students completed the surveys at the beginning and end of the study. Their responses to items were analyzed using percentages, resulting in simple quantitative data on the students' perceptions of classroom changes. All data results reported from the surveys were triangulated with other data sources.

Results/Findings

Context

Classroom Rules. Survey responses from the beginning of the study to its completion indicated that the students felt that the classroom rules were fair (67% to 90%) and enforced (86% to 95%). They also indicated that they were taught to behave in their classroom (90% to 100%). These survey results were supported by students' responses in the focus group and further validated by the final FPMS evaluation of the teacher's effectiveness. In particular, the FPMS evaluation showed that the teacher had made an improvement in classroom management and discipline, specifically in the areas of rule specification and enforcement. These improvements may have influenced students' perceptions of the rules and their enforcement. Interestingly, rule specification and enforcement (e.g., clarification, praise, and sanctions) have been documented in previous educational research as important factors in reducing school violence and improving teacher effectiveness (Florida State Department of Education, 1992; Olweus, 1987).

Classroom Safety. In the surveys and focus group the students relayed that although they did

not feel safe in the classroom and the beginning of the year, they did feel safe at the end of the year (52% to 76% response rate on survey). The teacher's interview and the students' responses in the focus group indicated that, in general, the "extreme behaviors" of all students (e.g., hitting) had decreased. In addition, the children's focus group responses indicated that the safe environment was critical as they stated that it was difficult to learn when others were misbehaving. It is suggested here that the students' increased feelings of safety may have been due to the teacher's improved effectiveness in the area of classroom management and discipline.

Trust and Respect. Interestingly, although the students felt that they were safe and were taught to behave, the survey results indicated that their perceptions of self-regulation decreased (90% to 76%) as did the level of mutual trust and respect (67% to 43%). The survey results were reinforced by focus group comments, and verified in the teacher's interview where she stated that the students did not take responsibility for their actions. The interview data did shed light on these issues of self-regulation and mistrust. The teacher described that she employed a traditional teaching philosophy and style where she was in control of the classroom (Agne, 1992; Posner, 1995; Wiles and Bond, 1993).

Interestingly, research has indicated that teachers exhibiting a traditional philosophy and style generally express mistrust of their students (Agne, 1992). Therefore, this teacher's teaching philosophy and style may have lead to her lack of trust in the students. The students reciprocated the teacher's mistrust of them. The combination of the traditional philosophy and style with the teacher in control and the resulting mistrust may also have contributed to the students' decrease in self-regulation, as they may have seen control as the teacher's domain and not their own. In addition, in the focus group session the students talked at great length about the reward system

for behavior, an external intervention for behavior management as opposed to an internally driven, self-regulating system. Therefore, the combination of traditionalism, mistrust, and extrinsic motivation appeared to be barriers to further student development of self-regulation and trust.

Practice

Teacher Effectiveness. The results of the FPMS evaluations of teacher effectiveness showed two areas for improvement initially: Domain 3.0, specifically reducing non-academic questions and increasing use of specific praise, and Domain 2.0 with a need for rule explication and monitoring, reducing ignoring of deviancy, and increasing desists without losing momentum. Within Domain 3.0, non-academic questions continued throughout the study, but there was a slight increase in the use of specific praise. On the other hand, all of the areas within Domain 2.0 improved. These behaviors were noted in the conflict resolution lesson observed, evidenced in the students' responses on the surveys, and in the students' comments in the focus group. It is suggested here that the teacher's training in and the implementation of the conflict resolution program directly influenced the increase in her effectiveness. In the conflict resolution training teachers were instructed to use the methodology of teach, model, coach, and encourage while using the program materials consistently. This methodology included suggestions for improving behaviors such as praise, rule specification and enforcement, and appropriate desists. It was documented that the second grade teacher implemented both the methodology and the materials, and improved her classroom management skills.

Use of Conflict Resolution. Both the teacher and the students were found to use conflict resolution in the classroom. The teacher was observed teaching and modeling conflict resolution

on numerous occasions. However, she did identify in the interview that change in her teaching style was difficult for her. She said that she was "working on" using conflict resolution. As noted previously, the teacher's traditional philosophy and style of teaching kept her in control of the classroom, making management and discipline her responsibility (Agne, 1992; Posner, 1995; Wiles and Bond, 1993). Since conflict resolution programs are founded on constuctivism (Astor, 1995; Carlsson-Paige & Levin, 1992a, 1992b; Kohlberg & Likona, 1990; Tolan & Guerra, 1994), it is easy to see that the teacher's philosophy and style were on the opposite end of the philosophical continuum. The dramatic shift in philosophy and style required of this teacher may be one of the reasons she had to "work on" using conflict resolution. In fact, at one point in the interview she expressed that she did not know how to give the children more opportunities for decision making so that they could become more responsible. It is at this juncture where additional teacher training in conflict resolution is required to enable a teacher to shift his/her philosophy and style and therefore move the students toward self-regulation (Agne, 1992).

Finally, the students themselves reported using conflict resolution skills in the classroom during the focus group session. They were also observed using the skills in the classroom. Both the teacher and the students reported that conflict resolution works. The children had a clear understanding of conflict and were able to construct alternative solutions to the conflicts. However, the children did not report successfully using their skills at home. It is suggested here that as the children become more self-regulating, they may be better able to export their skills to another setting. Additionally, these results support the need for creating a home link, with implementation of family training programs such as "Fighting Fair for Families" (Schmidt & Freidman, 1994).

Outcome

Referral Rate. In this case study, the referrals decreased from seven at the beginning of the research to one at the end of the research. This may have been due to two factors. First, as noted previously, the teacher's classroom management and discipline improved as a result of the conflict resolution program. As a result, improved classroom management may have led to decreased referrals of students to the administration for discipline problems, therefore supporting the findings of previous research on peace education programs (Tolan et al., 1990). In addition, two of the students with extreme behaviors were removed from the classroom that slightly reduced the referral rate.

Conclusion

Summary

How did the use of conflict resolution by a second grade teacher in the classroom impact the teacher and her students? The following paragraphs summarize the answer to this research question using the context, practice, and outcomes model.

In the area of context, the teacher's effectiveness in classroom management improved, particularly in the area of classroom rules, which appeared to result in the students' perceptions that the classroom was a safe place. Unfortunately, due to the teacher's traditional philosophy and style, trust was not high within the classroom.

The practice of conflict resolution was documented in the classroom. Both the teacher and the students reported successfully using conflict resolution and were observed doing so. Again, the teacher's general effectiveness in the area of classroom management and discipline improved during the course of program implementation, despite her identification of the "work" it took to

use conflict resolution. She began to make a shift from a more traditional philosophy and style to the constructivist philosophy, but struggled with the next steps in the transition to giving students more opportunities for decision making.

The outcome of referral rates dropped dramatically due to the teacher's improvement in classroom management and the removal of two students with extreme behaviors.

In essence, classroom level changes were documented, substantiating the work of Garcia (1992) that immediate impact can be made on the classroom environment. Additionally, the conflict resolution program was successfully implemented by the teacher and her students, albeit somewhat short of the goal of self-regulation. This latter notion is addressed in the subsequent section of this article.

Propositions

The two themes of teacher effectiveness and students' self-regulation emerged consistently in the study, both of which reflect the philosophy of constructivism. As discussed previously, a teacher must have a minimal level of effectiveness to promote students' learning. The case study reported here supports the notion that teacher effectiveness can be enhanced through training and practice. However, the teacher's philosophy and style were found to have an impact on the level of implementation of the conflict resolution program. The teacher's traditional philosophy and style was on the opposite end of the continuum from the constructivist philosophy on which the program was based. Therefore, the question arises, how does one facilitate the teacher's development? Furthermore, the teacher's philosophy and style were thought to hamper the development of self-regulation among her students. What can the teacher do to promote learning opportunities for students that allow them to construct solutions to problems and engage in

decision making for empowerment?

The research reported here raised many questions that bear further investigation. In addition to the themes identified previously in the area of process, issues within the context of conflict resolution were documented as well. For example, the issue of how to build and maintain a caring climate bears exploration as many variables (i.e., classroom rules, safety, trust, and respect) were found to impact it. Research on the relationships among these variables as well as how to promote development of them will provide valuable insights into using conflict resolution to reduce school violence. Until such research data is available, educators may consider addressing the following recommendations to facilitate schools' and teachers' implementation of conflict resolution.

Recommendation #1: Encourage teachers to implement conflict resolution in the classroom as it has positive outcomes for both them and their students, particularly in the area of violence reduction as documented by a decreased referral rate.

The research reported here showed multiple positive outcomes occurred with implementation. In addition to a reduction in referral rate, two other areas are particularly noteworthy: improved teacher effectiveness and students' successful use of conflict resolution skills.

Recommendation #2: Provide training and support for teachers implementing conflict resolution in the classroom.

The training provided for the teacher in the case study reported here was adequate for her to successfully implement the program. However, by providing additional training/support an even higher level of success would be attained. It is suggested here that seminars for teachers could be held on a monthly basis to provide them with growth producing opportunities such as:

(a) discussing implementation problems and constructing solutions to those problems (Sparks & Hirsh, 1997);

(b) learning about changing trends in the philosophy and style of teaching with accompanying activities designed to promote self-reflection for personal change (Agne, 1992; Arends, 1994; Sparks & Hirsh, 1997);

(c) and participating in community building exercises to promote trust and respect in the classroom such as "affirmation" and "sharing feelings" activities (TEA/AEL, 1993, p. 6).

Recommendation #3: Encourage teachers to continue rule specification and enforcement.

The research reported here indicated that the growth in the teacher's classroom management skills, especially in rule specification and enforcement, enhanced the students' feelings that the rules were fair and enforced and that the classroom was a safe place. Given current problems with violence as previously described in this article, safety is a key issue for students. This component of the conflict resolution program and the teacher's implementation of it clearly needs to continue.

These recommendations can help educators promote the strengths and positive outcomes of conflict resolution implementation identified in the research presented here. Additionally, the recommendations can support teachers implementing the program while addressing some of the barriers to realizing the full goal of conflict resolution, students' self-regulation. Further research on relationships among the themes identified in this research will certainly provide more information for all educators on how to reduce school violence.

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